

OPIE READ'S PLAY IS SLOW.

**"The Starbucks," a Story of
Tennessee Mountaineers, Is
Witnessed by Ex-Senator Ma-
son and Other Notables.**

A TALKY CHARACTER STUDY.

There was picturesqueness on both sides of the footlights at Daly's last night.

On the stage was the rude Tennessean atmosphere of "The Starbucks." In the lobby there lingered the long-haired author, Opie Read, his silver-streaked thatch surmounted by a slouch hat, and the greater portion of his tall, stalwart figure enveloped in an historic "Prince Albert."

In an upper box sat Col. Jack Crawford, "the poet-scout," who had galloped from the plains to see his playwright pal attempt to "round up" Broadway. The Colonel's luxuriant locks flowed out in an iron-gray mane over the collar of his coat, while the free spirit of the West flicked from the ends of his long mustache and dripped from his dashing "goatee."

With the breezy Crawford were ex-Senator "Billy" Mason and other citizens of the commonwealth of Illinois. All were enthusiastic, even to the degree of exuberance. Mason was especially appreciative. When anything in the play struck him as good he let the rest of the people in the house know it by drawing a deep sigh of satisfaction and then getting busy with his palms in a manner to shame the most calloused usher. Some of the things reached him a little late, but with him recognition was better late than never.

At the end of the second act the loyal statesman mysteriously disappeared, never to return.

Daly's never had quite such a night. It was as though a wild Western wave had swept into the place and told the Boiled Shirts of the effete East to go chase themselves. And the Boiled Shirts and White Lace Dresses looked up at the interesting box party and enjoyed immensely the novelty of genuine unrestrained spirits.

Read's Humor Enjoyed.

New Yorkers also enjoyed the quaint humor of Read. As a play, however, "The Starbucks" doesn't amount to much. The comedy is more of a character sketch than a play. It is filled with "atmosphere" and crude epigrams which have burrs of wit sticking to them. But the trouble is Mr. Read has allowed the inaction of his Tennessee types to set the pace for dramatic movement.

Most of the time the plot is standing still, and when it does move its gait isn't fast enough to make up for lost time.

Jasper Starbuck made wildcat whiskey for family use. Life Peters, a low-down sort, falling in his attempts to win Jasper's daughter and to blackmail the old man out of a thousand dollars, secures an appointment as Deputy United States Marshal and brings about the arrest of the simple-minded "moonshiner." Starbuck, who has served in the Union army, wins his release by appealing to the patriotic sympathies of the Federal judge, likewise a veteran.

Some of the speeches are knee-deep in sentiment of the popular-priced brew, and the romantic interest depends upon love affairs between the judge's son and the "moonshiner's" daughter and the judge's sister, who is a divorcee, and a mountain preacher.

Some Droll Characters.

Several droll characters are introduced, among them a backwoods product who borrows a meal bag and, after keeping it a year, brings it back only to borrow it again. Incidentally, he treats Broadway to a novelty in the way of a Jewish sharp solo.

Theodore Roberts gives a rough, virile portrayal of Starbuck, along the lines of his Col. Canby in "Arizona" and his hardy Southerner in "Jim Bludsoe."

Excellent characterizations are also contributed by Thomas Coleman as Life Peters, Mrs. Louise Rial as Mrs. Starbuck, William Visscher as the negro Kintchin, William Dills as Laz Spencer and William Evarts as Mose Blake.

Despite the excellence of the character drawing, however "The Starbucks" is woefully lacking in strong, sequent interest. It is therefore not likely to take very deep root in Broadway.

OPENINGS ELSEWHERE.

"Alphonse and Gaston," a new musical farce, created considerable laughter at the Fourteenth Street Theatre.—The size and enthusiasm of the audience at the Grand Opera House warranted the conclusion that droll Stuart Robson as Bertie the Lamb, and Bronson Howard's excellent play, "The Henrietta," will never grow old.—Sounds of revelry from Harlem told of the merry effect of the Weber and Fields happy family at the West End Theatre, where the music hall folk are playing a week's engagement before starting on the road.—Elita Proctor Otis and the Donnelly Stock Company appeared in "A Wife's Peril," a Sardou play, at the Murray Hill Theatre.—Primrose and West's Big American Minstrels gave a good show at the Harlem Opera House.—"The Christian" was revived by the stock company at the American Theatre.—Thomas E. Shea, in "The Price of Honor," was the attraction at the Star.—Charles McCarthy, in "One of the Bravest," was cheered at the Third Avenue.—"Happy Hoodigan" made patrons of the Metropolis forget their troubles.—The Brigadier Burleaguers captured the Dewey.

ESTABLISHED ATTRACTIONS.

Remaining at leading theatres were: "The Prince of Pilsen," Broadway; "The Sultan of Sulu," Wallack's; Grace George in "Pretty Peggy," Herald Square; "A Chinese Honeymoon," Casino; Blanche Walsh in "Resurrection," Victoria; "The Wizard of Oz," Majestic; "The Suburban," Academy of Music; "The Earl of Pawtucket," Manhattan; Blanche Bates in "The Darling of the Gods," Belasco Theatre; Marie Cahill in "Nancy Brown," Bijou; Amelia Bingharn in "The Frisky Mrs. Johnson," Princess; "The Unforeseen," Empire; Annie Russell in "Mice and Men," Garrick; Charles Hawtrey in "A Message from Mars," Criterion; Henry Miller in "The Taming of Helen," Savoy; Miss Wynne Mathison in "Everyman," Garden; "Mr. Blue Beard," Knickerbocker; Barnum and Bailey's Circus, Madison Square Garden.

BROOKLYN THEATRES.

Vlad Allen in Hal Caine's play, "The Great City," began a week's engagement at the Manhattan.—Howard Kyle in "The Columbia" in an excellent performance of "The Great City."